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RE: SOURCE

The Newsletter of the Municipal Excellence Network

ISSUE #4
NOVEMBER 2004

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Municipal Practices keep on coming

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Minister's Awards for Municipal Excellence

Re: source

Re: source is the newsletter of the Municipal Excellence Network, a collaborative partnership between Alberta municipalities and Alberta Municipal Affairs. The ME Network is founded upon three cornerstones – people; knowledge assets; and information technology – and serves municipalities by facilitating knowledge transfer and promoting excellence in local government.

Practices keep on coming...check out the latest arrivals!

Thanks to you, the people who comprise the foundation of the ME Network, there are now more than 300 municipal practices posted on the MEnet Web site, with another 100 being processed for inclusion in the database. These practices cover eight categories: governance, administration, finance, human resources, infrastructure services, development services, community services, and safety services.

Thanks to all of you who have submitted practices. For those who haven't, why not consider the good work in your own organization and share it with your colleagues in Alberta municipalities? Remember, the more people that contribute to the Municipal Excellence Network, the more value it brings to you and your colleagues. If you have a practice to share, go to www.menet.ab.ca, click on the "municipal practices" tab and choose "submit a practice" from the drop down list. You can follow the instructions from there. Or give the Municipal Excellence team a call. Their contact information is located on the Web site.

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Municipal Excellence network

Municipalities **sharing knowledge** *to excel*

www.menet.ab.ca

Alberta MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS

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Here are a few recent additions to the practice database you may find particularly interesting:

Parkland County's Business Information Centre, submitted by Cara Lembicz, is an on-line resource containing a business directory, a newsletter, maps, an events calendar and other information about the county's industrial areas. The county administration now has fewer inquiries for business information, and ratepayers and potential investors are more aware of the commercial and industrial services available within the county.

The **Safe City Nights** program, submitted by Bill Walker of the **City of Grande Prairie**, is a collaborative community effort to address inappropriate and unruly behaviour outside licensed establishments and during special events. Local protective services joined with the RCMP, Alberta Liquor and Gaming and community businesses to develop by-laws and enhance enforcement with the objective of reducing fights and disturbances in and around Grande Prairie bars and clubs.

The **5 Star Ortho Partnership** is another collaborative effort. It involves the **MDs of Willow Creek and Taber**, and the **Counties of Vulcan, Warner and Lethbridge.** Submitted by Cynthia Vizzutti of Willow Creek, the managing MD, this is a resource-sharing practice that provides all partners with a state-of-the-art, comprehensive ortho photography service they can integrate with their geographic information systems.

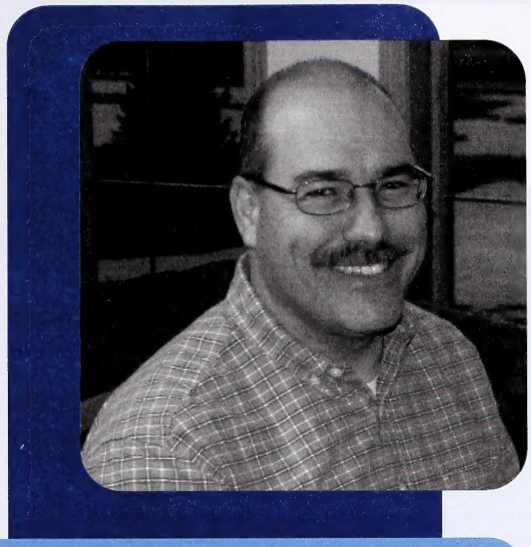
The **Town of Fox Creek** constructed a large, portable **Community Barbecue** that various community groups can use at low cost for events involving large numbers of people. Submitted by Larry Baran, this practice has created a valued community resource – managed by the local fire department, the propane-powered, trailer-mounted unit has fed hundreds of townspeople in the past few years.

To view these and other helpful practices, go to **www.menet.ab.ca**

Municipally Excellent Folks

The unofficial motto of the Municipal Excellence Network is "by the users, for the users, and with the users." People like you are the network's number one asset: your involvement, your contributions to the practice database and your communication with each other is what drives continuous improvement in Alberta's municipalities. Accordingly, this section is about getting to know the people who make up the network. In this issue we introduce Scott Barton, chief administrative officer for the Town of Raymond and the Village of Stirling. Yes, he's the CAO for both municipalities and as such has been able to generate efficiencies and savings for his two charges.

Scott began his local government career back in the mid-1980s as a recreation facilities manager in McGrath. He then moved to Raymond to become the town's



Meet Scott Barton, chief administrative officer for the Town of Raymond and the Village of Stirling.

"By the users, for the users, and with the users."

recreation director and further education and experience landed him the CAO position at Lethbridge Community College in 1988. It was a natural step into the same position with the Town of Raymond in 1993, and two years later he also became CAO in Stirling. Since then he's earned his MBA from Athabasca University. Scott lives in the village, spends the majority of his work time in Raymond, and relies on municipal secretary Sharon Berezay to handle a lot of the administrative work for Stirling.

Needless to say, Scott doesn't have time to "reinvent the wheel" whenever he needs a solution to a problem. He's always seen the value in consulting colleagues for their ideas and has long been a proponent of picking up the phone and calling around for information. For Scott, the ME Network is a more efficient way of achieving the same end ("no more phone tag"), with the added bonus of new ideas that are always at his fingertips.

Scott got involved as a network builder last year through the ME community services consultation. He particularly values the database of practices for the decision-making help it provides his town and village, through the information it provides on how others have addressed similar issues to the ones they are facing. He encourages his staff in both municipalities to become more efficient by checking for new and better ways to deliver services. Scott faces the same everyday challenges as most municipal administrators in Alberta – lack of time and resources – except that in his case, he deals with double the responsibility. That's why efficiency is his mantra, and the ME Network is one of his most important tools.

2004 Minister's Awards for Municipal Excellence

Alberta Municipal Affairs Minister Guy Boutilier will present the 3rd annual Minister's Awards for Municipal Excellence on November 18 and 19 at the fall conferences of the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties and the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association. A panel of municipal elected officials and senior administrators reviewed the 26 awards submissions this year.

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Here are the 2004 award recipients and honourable mentions:

The Outstanding Achievement Award goes to the City of Edmonton for its Elder Abuse Intervention Team (EAIT). The city's Community Services Department collaborated with the Edmonton Police Service and Edmonton's Catholic Social Services agency to prevent and respond to elder abuse by working in partnership with the community. In 2003, the EAIT offered intervention or consultation to 725 seniors, and also provided service through its work on a community consultation team, a seniors' safe housing complex and a seniors' abuse hotline. This practice has received provincial and international attention.

The City of Calgary earned the Innovation Award for its best practice guide entitled: *Fire Stopping Service Penetrations in Buildings.* Designers, contractors and inspectors across Canada have lacked a common understanding of fire stopping systems for multi-family wood-framed residential buildings. In conjunction with the Calgary Region Home Builders Association, the City of Calgary led a task force to address this issue. The resulting plain language manual was implemented in 2003 in Calgary and surrounding areas.

Strathcona County and Sturgeon County combined to win the Partnership Award for agricultural tourism product development. The two counties led a partnership with Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Alberta Tourism, Edmonton Tourism, the City of St. Albert, various marketing groups, and private sector tourism operators in the greater Edmonton region. They developed a cooperative strategy that spawned a number of successful regional events and tourism products such as agri-tourism seminars, self-guided farm tours, a harvest festival, and country Christmas retreat packages.

New in 2004, the Smaller Municipalities Award goes to the Village of Vilna for its visioning session. Located in northeastern Alberta, Vilna is committed to the historical preservation and commercial revitalization of its village centre. It hired a consultant to lead a visioning session that involved most of the community, including the children. The result was a clear blueprint for the future now being used by the village council to decide on capital projects and produce long-term plans.

Honourable Mention – Innovation

The Town of Canmore developed a community-monitoring program, which provides a bi-annual report on community trends and how the town is succeeding with its municipal planning strategies.

Honourable Mention – Partnership

The towns of Coalhurst, Cardston, Claresholm, Coaldale, Fort Macleod, Magrath, Milk River, Nanton, Picture Butte, Pincher Creek, Stavely, Taber, and Vulcan; the villages of Barnwell, Coutts, Cowley, Lomond, Noblefort, and Warner; and, the Oldman River Regional Services Commission collaborated to create a comprehensive geographical information system. The central goal of the project was to help small and medium sized municipalities in southwestern Alberta gain the technological tools they need while capitalizing on efficiencies gained by sharing resources and expertise.

Honourable Mention – Smaller Municipalities

The Village of Beiseker planned and held a volunteer awareness event that celebrated volunteer contributions and promoted volunteerism. The event's other purpose was to provide a platform to showcase the objectives and achievements of local boards, committees and organizations. The result was improved community awareness and recognition.

Congratulations to all these municipalities for their achievements and thanks to all that made submissions. It's not too early to begin thinking about which practice (or practices) your municipality can submit for the 2005 Awards. For information on the submission process go to **www.menet.ab.ca** and click on "minister's awards."

Re:source is published by the Municipal Excellence Network and Alberta Municipal Affairs.
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RESOURCE

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In This Issue

Project Management Skills

Municipality Excellent Banks

Mini Library of Practices

Improving Your Data Practices

Project management skills

a key factor in the

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